

SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSON

ELUCIDATION-AND REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL TOPIC, AUG. 9.

David's Victories, as Related in Second Samuel X, Verses 8-19—A Fulfillment of God's Promises.

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INTRODUCTION.—The Ammonites were descendants of Lot, a nephew of Abraham (Gen. xix, 30-33). Their territory was between the Arnon and the Jabbok (Numb. xxi, 24), on the east of Jordan, north of Moab. When Israel marched

pass through their lands and engaged Balam to curse them. On account of this inhospitality they were excluded from the congregation of Israel for ten generations (Deut. XXIII, 16). After the Babylonian captivity, the Samaritans became the vilest and most lawless neighbors. Several times they made incursions into the land, but were generally repulsed (Judges III, 13). Under the vigorous foreign policy of David they were made tributary to Israel. In the reign of Solomon, when the throne David sent a friendly message (1 Chron. x, 1-3). That conduct indicated a purpose to restore friendly relations, and to confer its authority. David was greatly offended, and preparations for war were immediately begun on both sides. Our lesson gives account of the short and decisive campaigns that followed.

CONFERENCE.—The Americans know that the Jews are not "single-handed" and alone successfully cope with Israel, then the greatest military power on the globe. They therefore sought alliance with other peoples who had submitted to David's hopes. The Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites, they might obtain victory. Four kings of the

Syrian empire, lying northeast of Ammon, entered into the league, furnishing thirty-three thousand men (verse 6). The number of the Ammonites was not stated, but they were also moved by a common purpose to break the supremacy of Israel. If successful, one-third of the empire of David, gained by his valor, would be wrested from his hands, and the way would be opened for rapid conquest of the entire section of the land. Still, if the confederates were unsuccessful, David would be more firmly established in the respect of his neighbors, as well as in the respect of his subjects, the tribes of six nations.

At the same time, the disposition of the enemy (verses 8-10) showed great generosity. The Syrians came down from the northeast, their march was toward the south, and they had marched northwardly, their right approach being toward the east. Had they been the Israelites, the man of many campaigns, in crossing the Jordan, found himself exposed to the fire of the tribes, and would have been obliged while the river would prevent a retreat. He was not in a situation to retreat, and he was not anxious to select the right hand, those known for their valor, to attack him. He was anxious to have an array against the Syrians. He appeared to be anxious to meet again those whom he had conquered, and to show them that he was not

doubtless he regarded as superior to the Americans. He was a man of great energy, and the people, citizen soldier, probably, were delivered to Abnail, the brother of Jacob, to be taken care of. The latter had been fighting for the conflict was near the little city of Medeba on the Jordan river, about thirty miles from the border of Ammon.

ADDRESS.—Having organized his forces, Job then addressed them in three parts. He first gave orders concerning the battle. If either died or was wounded, he was to call loudly for help by the other. Napoleon's favorite tactic might be applied here. "If you are killed," said he, "lie then proceeded to encourage the army, urging them to play the men (I Cor. xvi, 19), for they would win glory and honor. Then he appealed to their manliness, their patriotism and love of country. He exhorted them to be faithful to God, as urged by Moses (Deut. xxxi, 6), calculated to inspire all with courage and resolution. Jacob then exhorted them to have faith in God. "The Lord do that which seemeth Him good" (I Sam. ix, 18). It was a recognition of God as the author of victory. He then made the assignment that the battle is not to the strong (Eccles. ix, 11), but to Him who rules and overrules. He exhorted them to be obedient. "Job did not intercede for the help of Jehovah; neither did he say, I will give thanks to him when willing to abide the result."

FIGHT.—Jacob began the battle, advancing

on both sides there were memories of the old days, of the confidence and awakening the fears of their enemy, for, not far to the north of the Ammonite camp, lay the mighty men of David (II Sam. vii, 4). Was a battle to be fought here, as it had been on so many occasions. Probably there was a brief encounter, but the Ammonites were not to be driven back. They backed on Joab and fled toward home, leaving him master of the field. In like manner, learning that the Ammonites were not to be driven back, he retreated before Abihail and took refuge in the mountains. He was not to be driven back, he was bloodless, victory. Joab did not pursue the fleeing Syrians. He may have supposed that they would not return. He may have supposed that it were not prudent to venture into the enemy's country. He crossed the Jordan and returned to Jerusalem to report the king.

But that was not over. The thirty thousand men that David had before. The campaign was planned, not to assist the Ammonites, but to subvert them. The king of the Ammonites, King of Zoba (Ch. viii, 3), one of the allies, having rallied his own men, sought help from the king of the Syrians, King of the Euphrates. It was his duty to secure reinforcements. He was not to be driven back. His territories extended his dominions to the great river, he might at any time penetrate to the heart of the Ammonite country.

Hadrassar, found himself at the head of a spinning column of men, and he advanced southward to Heliem, a stronghold, which he had been told was the place where the king had been taken. The king had been taken, it had been made concerning the locality of this place, the most general opinion being that it was somewhere between the Euphrates and the Tigris, perhaps a hundred miles south of Damascus. It was not from the Euphrates, however, that the Syrians were more prudent than in the former instance.

THE HISTORY.—Joab crossed the Jordan with a comparatively small force, deemed sufficient, to meet the Syrians. The Syrians, however, had a large body gathered at Heliem, representing both sides of the Euphrates, must be met by greater numbers. King David, the veteran warrior, came to the front, and, with a small force, assembling all Israel, that is, the fighting men of the kingdom, he met the Syrians. The king came to the Syrian camp, proposing to meet them on their own ground, and to attack them before they could cross the frontier that he allowed the Syrians to invade and devastate the country, as he had done before. The battle resulted in a complete victory for the Syrians. The Syrians chariots were slain and forty thousand horsemen slain. Shobach, the Syrian commander, was slain. The Syrians were so completely routed that the strength of the enemy. The frightful slaughter was so complete that the Syrians were so completely routed that the strength of the enemy. Those who survived, the number unknown, to

PEACOCK the battle was decisive. There was no further disposition to help the children of Israel; they were left to their own devices. The potter's wheel would be loath to urge war. Besides, the petty kings of Assyria were composed of a number of small principalities, broke up by local feuds and rivalries. They could not unite against David and served him.

The results were manifold. The withdrawal of the Egyptian army from Syria, the removal of the Syrians and their merging in the other, weakening one and strengthening the other, placed the event of vastly greater significance than the annexation of Assyria. It opened the way for the rise of the Jewish nation at the close of the Franco-Prussian war. It gave David the promise he made to his father, which he had promised to Israel in the covenant with Abraham (Gen. xv, 18), extending from Egypt to the Euphrates. It completed the work begun by the broken dynasty of the house of Saul. It ended the reign of Solomon, a period of half a century. This peace afforded opportunity for the arts and formed the golden age.

"What value?—Of what value is this history to us?" With the exception of Job's pious remark, the answer is none whatever. The story itself might be reworded many times from the pages of secular history, ancient and modern, without losing its interest or its beauty. But there? For several reasons. It constitutes a life

Only the sufferer knows the misery of dyspepsia, but Hood's Sarsaparilla cures the most stubborn cases of this disease.

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